

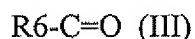
AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Listing of Claims:

1-13. (Canceled)

14. (Currently amended) A method for preserving and/or storing a microorganism which exhibits at least one nitrilase enzyme activity, comprising preserving and/or storing the microorganism in an aqueous medium which comprises at least one aldehyde, wherein the total aldehyde concentration is in the range from 0.1 to 100 mM and wherein the aqueous medium does not comprise any additions of cyanide compounds.

15. (Previously presented) The method of claim 14, wherein the aldehyde is described by the formula III



where R6 can be substituted or unsubstituted, branched or unbranched, C1-C10-alkyl or C2-C10-alkenyl or substituted or unsubstituted aryl or hetaryl.

16. (Previously presented) The method of claim 14, wherein the preservation step is carried out before the cells are treated with a reactant whose reaction is to be catalyzed by the cells.

17. (Cancelled).

18. (Previously presented) The method of claim 14, wherein the aldehyde is selected from the group consisting of unsubstituted benzaldehyde and substituted benzaldehydes.

19. (Withdrawn) A method according to claim 14, wherein the microorganism is selected from the species of the Enterobacteriaceae or Nocardiaceae family.

20. (Previously presented) The method of claim 14, wherein the microorganism is selected from the group consisting of Pseudomonas, Burkholderia, Nocardia, Acetobacter, Gluconobacter, Corynebacterium, Brevibacterium, Bacillus, Clostridium, Cyanobacter, Staphylococcus, Aerobacter, Alcaligenes, Rhodococcus and Penicillium.

21. (Currently amended) The method of claim 14, comprising at least one further step ~~for stabilizing, preserving to stabilize, preserve, and/or storing~~ store enzymes, wherein said at least one further step is selected from the group consisting of:

- a) adding at least one inorganic salt at a concentration of at least 100 mM;
 - b) adding metal salts whose metal cation functions as a nitrilase prosthetic group;
- and
- c) adding nitriles and/or amides.

22. (Withdrawn) A preparation for preserving and/or storing microorganisms which exhibit at least one nitrilase enzyme activity, with the preparation comprising

- a) at least one aldehyde having a total aldehyde concentration in the range from 0.1 to 100 mM/l, and
- b) cyanide compounds, selected from the group consisting of nitriles, hydrocyanic acid and cyanide salts, at a total concentration which is at most 10 mol% of the total aldehyde concentration.

23. (Currently amended) The preparation of microorganisms according to claim 22, wherein said preparation does not comprise any additions of cyanide compounds and wherein the preparation of microorganisms is stored at 0°C to 22°C.

24. (Withdrawn) A foodstuff, feedstuff, pharmaceutical or fine chemical produced from preparation of microorganisms according to claim 22.

25. (Withdrawn) A method for preparing recombinant proteins, enzymes or fine chemicals using a preparation of microorganisms according to claim 22 or a preparation thereof.

26. (Withdrawn, currently amended) A method for preparing carboxylic acids and/or amides, comprising the following steps:

- a) culturing a microorganism which exhibits at least one nitrilase enzyme activity,
- b) adding at least one aldehyde, with the total aldehyde concentration being in the range from 0.1 to 100 ~~mM/l~~ mM and storing at 0°C to ~~20°C~~ 22°C until being used in step (c),

c) bringing the aldehyde-treated preparation of said microorganisms into contact with at least one nitrile and converting said nitrile into a carboxylic acid and/or an amide.

27. (Currently amended) A method for preserving and/or storing a microorganism which exhibits at least one nitrilase enzyme activity, comprising

(a) preserving and/or storing the microorganism in an aqueous medium which comprises at least one aldehyde, wherein the total aldehyde concentration is in the range from 0.1 to 100 mM and wherein the aqueous medium does not comprise any additions of cyanide compounds, and

(b) stabilizing, preserving and/or storing the at least one nitrilase enzyme activity by

(i) adding at least one inorganic salt at a concentration of at least 100 mM, and/or

(ii) adding metal salts whose metal cation functions as a nitrilase prosthetic group.

28. (Currently amended) A method for preserving and/or storing a microorganism which exhibits at least one nitrilase enzyme activity, comprising preserving and/or storing the microorganism in an aqueous medium which comprises at least one aldehyde, wherein the total aldehyde concentration is in the range from 0.1 to 100 mM, wherein the aqueous medium does not comprise any additions of cyanide compounds, and wherein the microorganism is of recombinant origin.

29. (Previously presented) The method of claim 14, wherein the nitrilase enzyme activity is preserved for a period of up to 37 days.

30. (New) The method of claim 14, wherein the preserving and/or storing is at 0°C to 22°C.